

Russia and the rise of Islamic terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa

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'France, get out!'
'Hey! ... who says it's my hand?'



Source: Damien Glez ²: *'Sahel: French plot vs. Russian plot?'*

Abstract: Russia and China challenge the liberal order and rule of law on a global and regional level. The Trump administration has facilitated the support of the move away from the liberal international order and the 'Westphalian' system of states that America had defended for centuries. Extremism is thriving around the world, including in sub-Saharan Africa, fuelled by the aftermath of colonialism, poverty and Islamist ideologies. Regions with limited statehood became failed states where violent conflicts threatened regional security and stability. Russia benefited from the resulting power vacuum. Moscow focused on countries that were formerly French and Portuguese colonies, which Moscow believed are easier to infiltrate. Under these conditions, Putin is free to exploit the political and social contradictions in Africa and destabilize the Western order, even at the risk of the rise of Islamic terrorism. Terrorist criminal pipelines and corrupt states have been exploited by Russian arms dealers across Africa for decades. These included notorious support for the Taylor regime in Liberia in the early 2000s, including the infamous Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout, dubbed the 'merchant of death'. The cooperation was based on state control of ports of entry and exit for criminal organizations to safeguard profit-sharing, diplomatic passports, including associated immunity, and the rule of law, which ensured the smooth marketing of these companies. Today, Russia benefits primarily from providing 'security' to autocratic leaders, including arms sales, advice and training in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations against Islamic terrorism in exchange for access to African resources and markets. Aside from Al-Quida, the Islamic State (ISIS), Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab other local Islamic organizations are fuelling terrorism in SSA. Moscow is particularly interested in the Horn of Africa to control important trade routes of global importance.

Keywords: [Russia](#), [Vladimir Putin](#), [Sub-Sahara Africa](#), [global power](#), [African resources](#), [fragile state](#), [poverty](#), [extremism](#), [Islamist terrorism](#), [Boko Haram](#), [ISIS](#), [arms deals](#), [arms industry](#), [Eritrea](#), [Nigeria](#), [Ghana](#), [Senegal](#), [Mali](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Mozambique](#), [Somalia](#), [Kenya](#), [South Sudan](#), [Horn of Africa](#), [Postcolonialism](#), [Westphalian sovereignty](#), [fake news](#), [Françafrique](#)

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² © [Damien Glez](#), 2020, [Jeune Afrique](#), 15 January 2020. Glez is an internationally renowned Franco-Burkinabe cartoonist and columnist.

1. Introduction

Russia's resurgence in [Sub-Saharan Africa](#) (SSA) and the geo-political orientated Africa policy of [Vladimir Putin](#) started in 2012. Indirectly, it benefited not least from the growth of [Islamist terrorism](#), for example, in the [Sahel](#) zone and [Mozambique](#). Moscow's gateway was to use fragile states and ongoing conflicts to secure lucrative arms deals and mining concessions. Moscow signed military cooperation agreements with 21 African governments, including negotiations on establishing military bases. In some cases, it used paramilitary private contractors like the [Wagner group](#) to manipulate the course of local conflicts in its favour. The highly controversial group was founded in 2014 and was first involved during the [war in Donbas](#) in Ukraine (Oxford Analytica, 2021). The strategy of hiring private mercenaries to do the 'dirty work' is nothing new. Already the US contracted former soldiers from the [Navy Seals marines](#) for private military companies such as [Blackwater](#), heavily involved in atrocities in the Iraq war in 2007 (Forestier, 2018).

A notable recent example of Russian counterinsurgency was the outmanoeuvring of the French troops to combat Islamic terrorism in [Mali](#). Therefore, France, the EU and the UN tried new, non-violent methods of combating terrorism, since the French anti-terrorist operations '[Serval](#)' and '[Barkhane](#)' had not been successful (Davidchuk & Degterev & Sidibe, 2021). Under these conditions, Paris had to redefine its ambitious post-colonial priorities and replace them with more narrowly-defined national interests. Thus, France pragmatically turned in its foreign policy away from 'wars of choice' to 'wars of necessity' (Pannier & Schmitt 2019).

Russia's aggression of [Ukraine](#) in 2022 called the post-colonial stance of [Paris](#) and its efforts to Europeanize its fight against terrorism in the Sahel into question. This was all the more problematic because the [IS](#) threat extended meanwhile to [West African](#) coastal countries like the [Ivory Coast](#), [Togo](#) and [Benin](#), where the key French political, economic and security interests in the region are located (Bansept & Tenenbaum, 2022).

Already before the [September 11 attacks](#) in 2001, the exploitation of religious belief had become an additional instrument in the tool-kit of the strategic policy of global powers. For example, the US, as well as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, were initially eager to support [Sunni pan-Islamist](#) groups in [Afghanistan](#) against the Soviet invasion in 1979 that had triggered the [Soviet-Afghan war](#) (1979-1989). This generated knock-on effects among other extremist social movements that became increasingly difficult to control (Gardner, 2007).

In the early 2000s, another regional conflict contributed to the establishment of terrorist networks in West African [Liberia](#), [Sierra Leone](#) and beyond. The then Liberian ruler [Charles Taylor](#) allowed criminal bands from Russia, South Africa, Israel and Ukraine to operate in his country at the same time when Islamic terrorist groups [Hezbollah](#) and [Al-Qaeda](#) were looking for lucrative deals in the country. They were mostly involved in the illegal trade in diamonds from neighbouring Sierra Leone (Farah, 2011). The weapons were largely procured by Russian arms dealers, including [Viktor Bout](#), an infamous Russian gun seller, internationally notorious as 'Merchant of Death'. He allegedly used his air transport companies, established since the [collapse of the Soviet Empire](#), to smuggle arms to Africa and the Middle East during the 1990s and early 2000s. Close cooperation and sharing of profits between the state and arms dealers became the base for the trade. Thereby, the Taylor government assured free access to the ports of entry and exit, access to diplomatic passports and the accompanying immunity (Farah, 2011).

More recently, [Mozambique](#) became another case of Russia's counterinsurgency. Since 2019 Russian mercenaries and military hardware were delivered to help the government fight [jihadists](#), linked to the terror groups [ISIS](#) and [Al-Shabaab](#) and other insurgents in the [Cabo Delgado](#) province in northern Mozambique. Moscow's military assistance was provided in exchange for military, economic and political collaboration, including the prospect of a future Russian naval military base in the country (Sukhankin, 2019). Thus, Moscow could kill two birds with one stone and also outmanoeuvre the competing French [Total](#) LNG project in the [Battle of Palma](#), a town on the northeast coast of Mozambique's Cabo Delgado Province. The Russian counter-insurgency was again established by employing the [Wagner Group](#) in 2019. Yet, the involvement of the Wagner Group aggravated the problem instead of solving it. It even sparked increased activities of external radical forces in the region. Consequently, the group was withdrawn. Besides, a [South African](#) mercenary group, the [Dyck Advisory Group](#) (DAG), had been deployed in vain. Attacks by the [Jamaat Ansar al-Sunna](#) terrorist continued and became even worse. Therefore, Total organized its own security by hiring French mercenaries for the [Foreign Legion](#) (Neethling, 2021).

Furthermore, Russia was allowed by contract to build military bases in [Mozambique](#), [Sudan](#), [Madagascar](#), [Egypt](#), [Eritrea](#), and the [Central African Republic](#), according to a report of the German intelligence service, published by the Foreign Ministry and a German tabloid (Ersozoglu, 2021). In return, Moscow could count on the support of African leaders in foreign policy. Thus, Eritrea voted against a UN General Assembly resolution, strongly condemning Russia's war in Ukraine in 2022. 18 other African countries abstained, including [Mali](#), [Mozambique](#), [Angola](#) and [South Africa](#), whereas [Nigeria](#) was among the 141 UN members that overwhelmingly voted to reprimand Russia over its invasion of Ukraine (Kohnert, 2022).

In short, Russia aggressively called the liberal order and rule of law in African states into question. Yet, even areas of limited statehood can definitely be socially accepted. They are neither necessarily illegitimate nor ungoverned or anarchic. Only if they descend into violent conflict and government breakdown, for example by continuing terrorist attacks, regional security and political stability are actually endangered (Börzel & Risse 2018).

2. The rise of Islamic terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa

For a better understanding of Islamist terrorism, it is important to consider its roots, its inherent logic and lines of action. In addition to [Al-Qaeda](#), the [IS](#), the 'Islamic State's West Africa Province' ([ISWAP](#)) and [Boko Haram](#), several other extremist Islamist organizations executed terrorist attacks in SSA. For example, an [Al-Qaeda](#) branch in Mali escalated attacks in the Sahel, including a series of explosive attacks aimed at French and UN security personnel (Bayrakdar & Kocan & Estelle, 2021). Central questions in this context are, why, and since when, did these groups claim Islam to legitimate their cruel actions? How do they act exactly, what are their strategies and methods and how are they financed? (Guidère, 2017; Namaïwa, 2017).

Since the terrorist [attacks on American embassies](#) in [Dar es Salaam](#), [Tanzania](#) and [Nairobi](#), [Kenya](#) in 1998, terrorism spread in SSA. Among the countries that suffered severely from these attacks were [Somalia](#), [Kenya](#), [Nigeria](#), [Mali](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [South Sudan](#), [Libya](#) and [Egypt](#) (Gyamfi, 2018).

One root of modern-day terrorism in West Africa goes back two centuries. Already in 1804, the Fulani leader [Usman dan Fodio](#) called a [jihad](#) against the local population that got enslaved and either settled in local slave plantations in the [Sokoto Caliphate](#) or traded to [Oudiah](#), the infamous hub of [West African slave trade](#) in [Dahomey \(Benin\)](#) throughout the 19th century (Mason, 1978; Kohnert, 1986). Many Muslims in [Northern Nigeria](#) still venerate Usman dan Fodio and his descendants, the founder of the dynasty of the [Sokoto Caliphate](#), including the [Sultan of Sokoto](#), the spiritual head of Nigeria's Muslims that make up more than half of Nigeria's population. Nigeria, with [estimated 211 million inhabitants](#), is by far the most populous African country. Many a terrorist might invoke Usman dan Fodio's call for [jihad](#), although they nowadays fiercely fight the established elite in the Northern Emirates of Nigeria. Since 2018, more than 5,000 people have been killed in Northern Nigeria by 'armed bandits', most of them presumably belonging to [Boko Haram](#) and affiliated groups (R2P, 2022).

Besides, the creation of [Salafi-jihadi](#) groups in the West African [Sahel](#) was originally reinforced by local grievances, notably notorious clashes between migrant [Fulani herdsmen](#) and the sedentary peasant population (Carter, 2022). Over generations, [transhumance](#) had regularly led to violent conflicts between Fulani nomads and local peasants.

Graph 1 : Al Qaeda's Sahel branch escalates attacks



Source: 'Africa File: Al Qaeda's Sahel branch escalates attacks', Carter, 2022; Source of graph: Kathryn Tyson, [Critical Threats](#), May 2022 ³

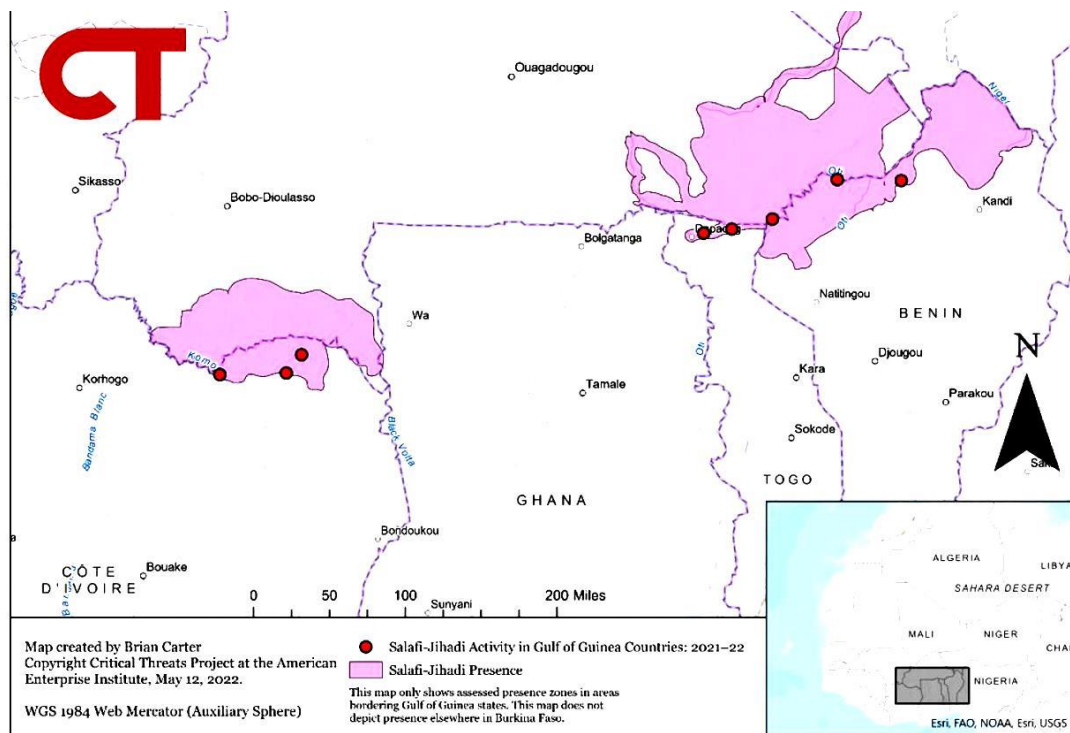
To take [Togo](#) as an example, transhumance conflicts resulted in August 2011 in Bago (Central Togo at the Benin border) in 50 dead and over 100 injured persons. During the 2016

³ The *Africa File* is an analysis and assessment of the Salafi-jihadi movement in Africa and related security and political dynamics. January 15, 2021.

campaign, conflicts led to the death of five persons. In the meantime, the government in [Lomé](#) has put in place a Transhumance Management Plan (TMP) for the regulation of conflicts (Kohnert, 2019).

In [Burkina Faso](#), Islamist terrorists perpetrated a bloody attack in 2021 in Solhan, in the northeastern parts of the country, which left 132 dead. On 25 May 2022, another attack, attributed to [jihadists](#), killed dozens of residents of [Madjoari](#) who were trying to leave their village placed under blockade by jihadists which put the death toll at about 200 dead in two months (*Le Monde avec AFP*, 2022).

Graph 2: Areas of [Salafi jihadism](#) in the coastal [Gulf of Guinea](#) states



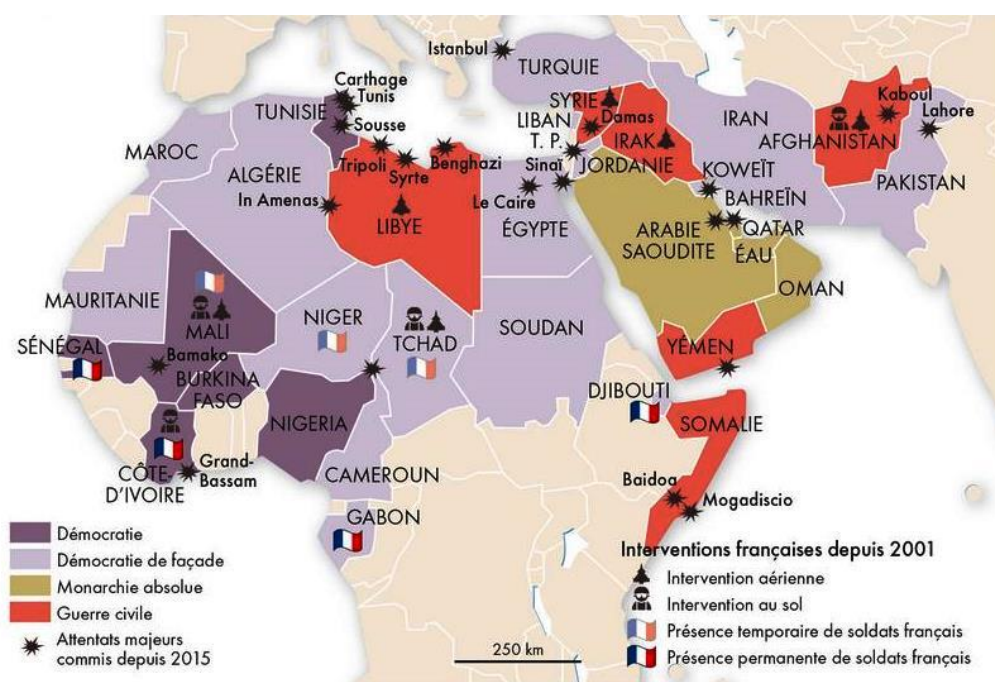
Source: Carter, 2022; Critical Threats Project, American Enterprise Institute

In recent years, [Salafi-jihad](#) terrorists started to intensify attacks in the northern border regions of several countries bordering the [Gulf of Guinea](#). Thus, they conducted attacks targeting security forces in the border areas of northern Togo, Benin and Ghana since November 2021 (Carter, 2022). The Al Qaeda's Sahel affiliate, [Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wa al Muslimeen](#) (JNIM) also attacked a hotel in the Ivorian capital [Abidjan](#) in 2016 as well as Ivorian security forces in northern [Cote d'Ivoire](#) in 2021 and 2022, sometimes in retaliation for counterterrorism operations (Carter, 2022).

The sources of funding for the terrorists in SSA are little researched and hidden behind the fear of the involved, often forcibly recruited, collaborators. As far as we know, there are three main sources of funding: ransom demands, both for villagers and cattle, trafficking of all kinds of illegal trade, and tax collection on the villagers living in the terrorist controlled regions. As for trafficking, the extremists mostly rely on securing trafficker's convoys or levying taxes on the circulation of illegal products (Antil, 2022).

Also, [transhumance](#) conflicts became more virulent in the northern regions of the [Ivory Coast](#) in recent years because the government responded inadequately. It thus facilitated it for the JNIM to enlist Ivorian pastoralists. Security forces and local peasants occasionally arrested [Fulani nomads](#) indiscriminately, branding them and equalling Fulani herdsmen generally with criminal and [jihadist](#) groups (Carter, 2022). Similar problems arose as early as in the 1980s, in the aftermath of the great [Sahelian drought](#) of the early 1970s when many Fulani pastoralists immigrated with their cattle. Whereas the Ivorian government had welcomed their contribution to national beef production, they were vehemently opposed by local [Senufo](#) peasants in the [Savanna region](#) because of uncompensated crop damage (Bassett, 1988).

Graph 3: Political regimes and foreign interventions since the [Arab spring](#)



Source: Guidère, M., 2017

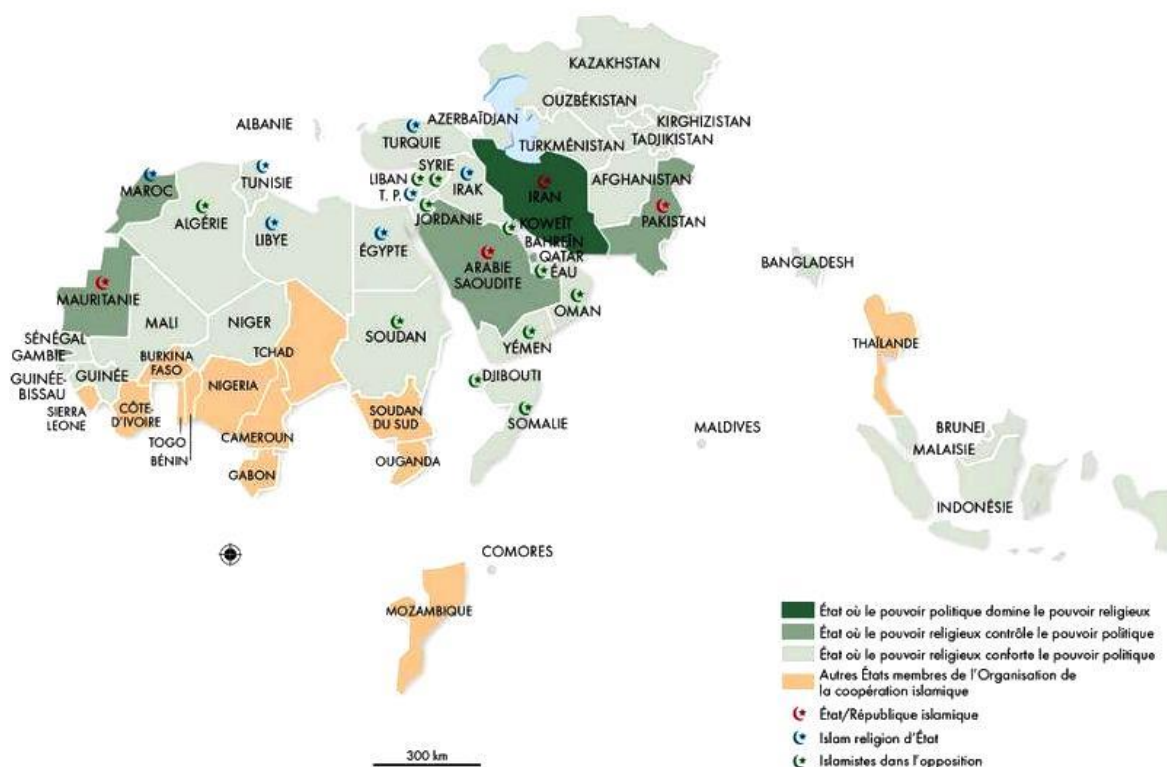
In [Mozambique](#), terrorist violence focused in the past years on the country's Northern regions. This terrorism had a long record of state human rights violations that might have prepared a violent response. For example, the *ProSavana* project of land-grabbing had intended to convert 11 million hectares belonging to small farmers into a plantation of rice and soya beans. The output was mainly produced for export to Asian markets in cooperation with Brazilian and Japanese institutions. It was closed in 2020 by the local government because of local and international protests. Another government project in [Moma](#) ([Nampula Province](#)) that started in 2007 allegedly committed various human rights violations besides its harmful environmental repercussions. Last, but not least, the Montepuez Ruby Mining, a private Anglo-Mozambican company, had to pay about US \$ 8 m to community members of Nthoro ([Montepuez District](#)) for gross HR violations against informal labourers (almost all of [Kimwani](#) origins), including the death of about 18 of them. In this respect, the LNG project of [TotalEnergies](#) in [Cabo Delgado](#) mentioned above, represented only the tip of an iceberg. Islamist incursions started in October 2017, with an attack on a police border post in [Mocimboa da Praia](#) in Cabo Delgado province. Since then, the Maputo government had been unable to manage the conflict, which resulted in about 2,500 dead and almost 1 million refugees (Bussotti, 2021).

Under these conditions, it is no surprise that the involvement of the [Wagner Group](#) to solve the conflict aggravated the problem instead of solving it. As a rule, mercenaries do not bother about the socio-political background of the struggles they are supposed to resolve. This created worldwide security challenges, no least, because the [Westphalian state sovereignty](#) model that hitherto had ruled the global political order was challenged by the creation of safe havens for terrorists, displacement of refugees and mass migration (Antwi-Boateng, 2017).

According to the French *National Defense Review*, the terrorist menace will remain a structuring element of the strategic vision of [Paris](#). It is even likely to intensify and take on new forms. Weakened terrorist groups like the [Islamic State](#) will continue to try to restructure themselves by even more virulent propaganda campaigns, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, and by exporting their struggle to the territory of the Western enemy (Chaouch, 2018). Whereas Africa registered 381 attacks in 2015, resulting in 1.394 fatalities, five years later the number increased to 7.108 attacks and 12.519 fatalities (Bussotti, 2021).

Meanwhile, even [Senegal](#), which had been considered so far a bulwark of African democracy, has been affected. The peaceful coexistence of the four major Muslim brotherhoods ([Qadiriya](#), [Tidjaniya](#), [Mouridiya](#), [Layèniya](#)) that dominated religion and domestic politics, was threatened by so-called ‘reformist’ [Salafist](#) or [Wahhabi](#) sects (Châtelot, 2021). Apparently, [Ansar Dine](#) has aligned itself with [AQIM](#) has been recruiting numerous combatants in other Sahel countries, among which [Senegal](#) [Niger](#) and [Nigeria](#). These fighters are reportedly framed and trained by veteran Jihadi coming from [Saudi Arabia](#) or from the [Pakistani tribal belt](#) (EU-Parliament, 2013; Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019).

Graph 4: Political Islam in the Arab and Islamic world



Source: Guidère, M., 2017

Beside [Senegal](#), also [Ghana](#) has been regarded for a long time as a stable country in the midst of increasing extremist violence and political instability in West Africa. But Islamic terrorism

is increasingly moving from the Sahel toward coastal countries. At present, more than 53 % of all [ECOWAS](#) member states suffered more or less from terrorist insurgencies (Muqthar, 2022). Ghana's recent history has shown several long-standing and still unresolved chieftaincy and ethnic conflicts, notably in the Northern regions. Over 352 chieftaincy conflicts are still unresolved. Moreover, the accompanying problems of transhumance are also known to peasants and pastoralists in Northern Ghana. The degradation of soils, the depletion of vegetative cover, and other negative effects of climate change impact the local population. Soaring food prices as a side-effect of Russia's aggression in Ukraine increase the threat. All this might instigate unrest and constitutes a gateway for extremist to be easily exploited. Allegedly, already, more than 13 Ghanaians had travelled to fight¹ with Islamist terrorists since 2015. Also, a report of the Ghanaian parliament revealed that at least 100 other Ghanaian migrants may have joined the Islamic State in Libya (Muqthar, 2022). In June 2021 a Ghanaian suicide bomber attacked a French Reconnaissance camp in Gossi, Central Mali, an action allegedly commanded by the [Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin](#) (JNIM). In September 2021, thirty-three suspected terrorists in the [Savelugu](#) area in Northern Ghana had been arrested. According to the Ghanaian security services, at least some of them might have had direct links to Islamic terrorists in Mali and Burkina Faso (Muqthar, 2022).

At the same time, Ghana-Russian relations grew steadily closer. In 2020, Russia exported US\$ 119 m to Ghana, mainly wheat (US\$ 48.6 m), nitrogenous fertilizers (US\$ 23 m), and chemical fertilizers (US\$ 13.6 m). Russian exports to Ghana increased during the past 24 years at an annualized rate of 14 %, from US\$ 5.1 m in 1996 to US\$ 119 m in 2020 (OEC, 2022). Military and technical cooperation between the two countries was agreed upon in 2016, however, the cooperation is apparently not yet in force (Reuters 2018). Whether counter-insurgency is included it is not known. In the current Russian war in Ukraine, [Accra](#) sides with Ukraine against the Russian invasion (BBC-news, 2022). Alongside with Ghana, additional three African states explicitly came out against the actions of Putin, namely [Gabon](#), [Kenya](#) and [Nigeria](#). [Cameroon's](#) autocratic president [Paul Biya](#), however, who reigns the country since 1982, signed a security deal with Putin amid war in Ukraine and conflict at home (Gbadamosi, 2022).

3. Russia's involvement in the fight against terrorism in SSA

At the latest with the [Russia-Africa summit](#) in October 2019 in [Sochi](#), collaboration within the framework of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency became an integral part of Moscow's Africa policy. [Vladimir Putin](#) underlined the importance of cooperation with African security services, especially in the [Sahel](#) zone, the [Lake Chad Basin](#), and the [Horn of Africa](#). Apparently, countering extremism and terrorism became an important legitimization of Russia's involvement in the continent (Kostelyanets, 2021). Given the history of Russian-African relations (Kohnert, 2022; Sukhankin, 2020), which has had all along a strong focus on military cooperation, protesters in Mali, for example, called for Russian troops to be invited in 2019 to solve the Islamist terrorist menace, instead of the increasingly unpopular French. It goes without saying, that as a rule these arrangements involved also trade deals, to guarantee access to Africa's resources and markets (Kostelyanets, 2021).

Thereby, Moscow apparently focussed on countries that had formerly been French and Portuguese colonies because these might in its view be more easily to subvert. The [Horn of Africa](#) was of special interest to Moscow. The neighbouring [Gulf of Aden](#) allowed for the control of strategically important international shipping routes. Therefore, Russia increased

trade and investment in countries in this region, notably arms sales, minerals and other natural sources and nuclear energy (Oğultürk, 2017).

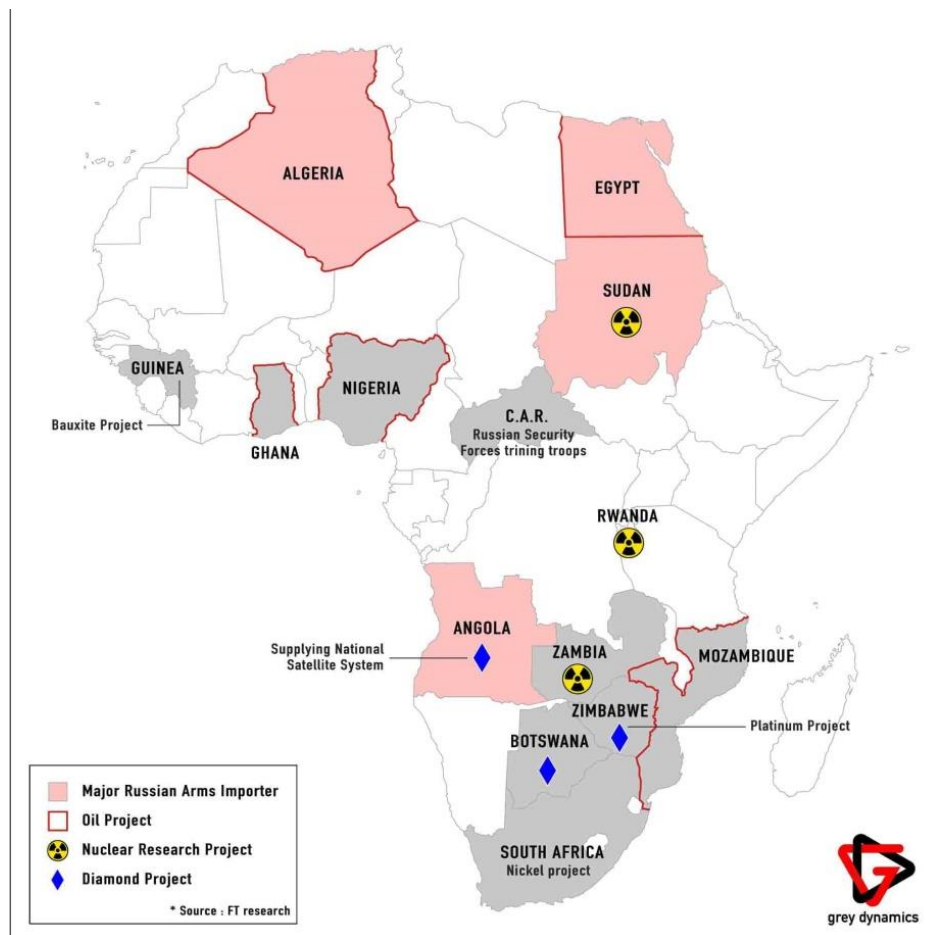
Graph 5: Russia's military presence in Africa, 2019



Source: Lévesque, 2020 ; Kohnert, 2022:6

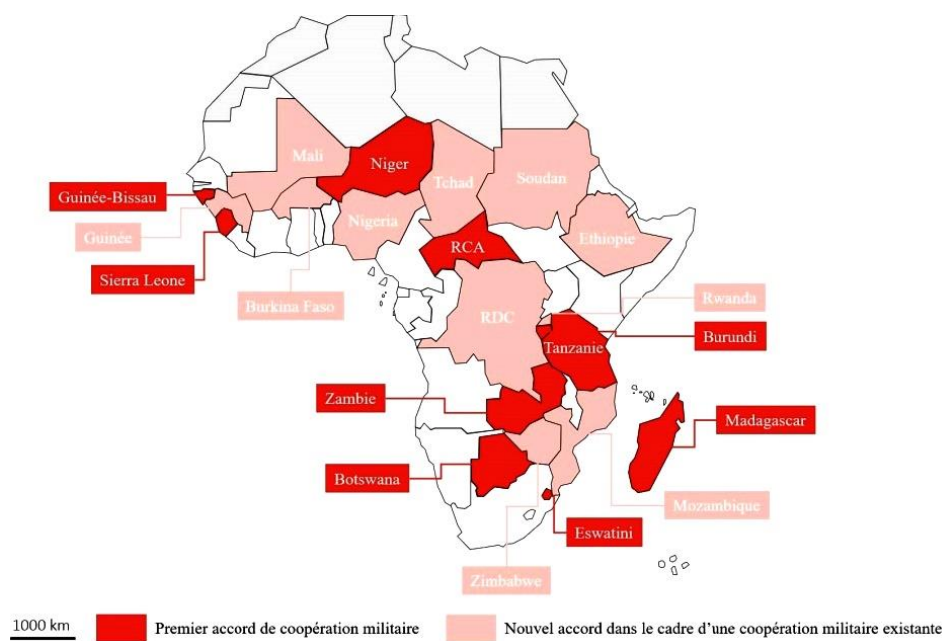
Counterinsurgency was provided by both official military cooperation, e.g. by Russian military training, and private military contractors as by the [Wagner Group](#). The latter had less formal human rights restrictions and could also be used for example by autocratic regimes to suppress anti-government protests (Sukhankin, 2020).

Graph 6: Russia widens the scope in Africa



Source: Ersozoglul, 2021; Kohnert, 2022:5

Graph 7: Russian-African military cooperation agreements (Sub-Saharan Africa since 2017)



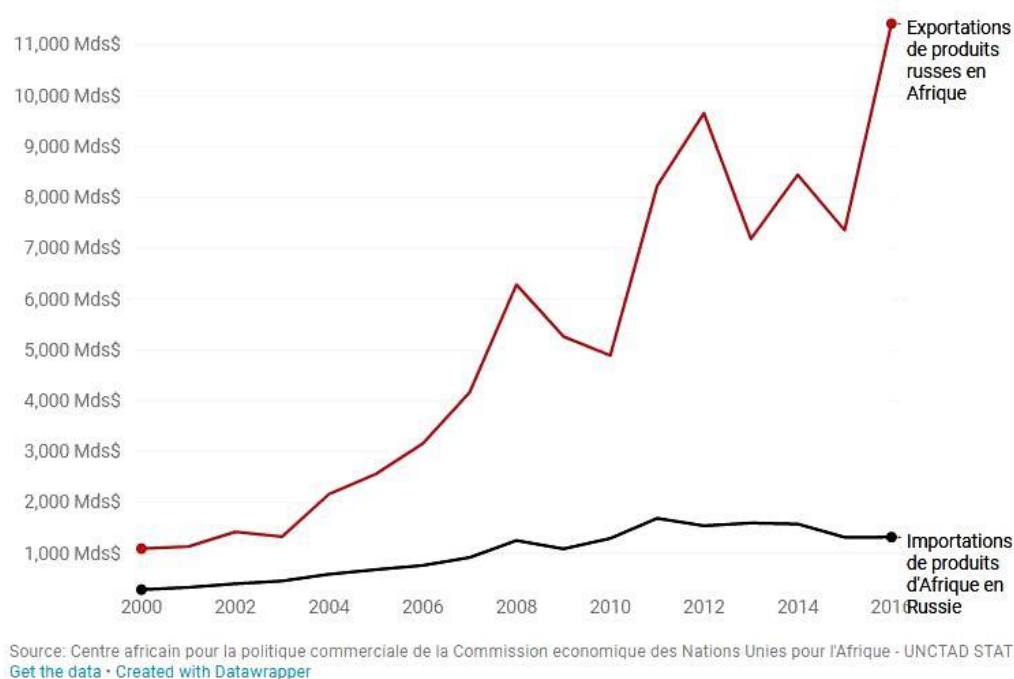
4. Conclusion

A new ‘cold war’ develops in Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, instigated by Russia, which is following, at least partially, China in conquering new markets, sources of raw materials and political influence on African governments regardless of their democratic orientation (Forestier, 2018). Unlike China, however, Moscow focuses on military support for autocratic regimes and the destabilization of the Western order, especially in the French and Portuguese colonies. Thus, Russia and the Islamist terrorist have a common target, to fight the Western way of life, notably that of the political elites of these countries (Normand, 2021).

Thereby, the local population is by no means insensitive to criticism of the notoriously corrupt and clientelistic elites that do not bother about their poverty and poor governance, notably concerning deficient economic and human well-being. Although mainly failed and fragile African states are at the roots of the misery of generations, the former masters of French and Portuguese colonies have been an ideal scapegoat for all discontents (Normand, 2021).

The IS and Russian media, such as the international [Russia Today](#) network (RT) and [Sputnik](#), but above all the [Internet Research Agency](#) (IRA) known in Russian [Internet slang](#) as the *Trolls from Olgino*, linked to the [Russian oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin](#) and operating on behalf of Russian business and political interests, flood African social networks with fake news ([Internet Research Agency](#), Wikipedia; for details focussing on the IS and Russia, cf. Prier, 2017). The notorious Francophone network of [Françafrique](#) (Kohnert, 2019) is easy prey because of long-standing corruption, common nepotism and, not least, the outlived and highly controversial franc [CFA franc zone](#) (Kohnert, 2005). Thus, activists, jihadists and Russia share the same vision of the enemy (Normand, 2021).

Graph 8: Growth of Russian-African trade, 2000 – 2016, in US\$ bn



Source: Faivre, Agnès (2018)

Far from restricting itself to combat terrorism, Russia reinforced its presence on political and commercial levels too. The Russian Defense Minister, [Sergei Shoigu](#), remarked, not without reason, that with "the [disintegration of Libya](#) which has led to an increase in the terrorist threat in the north and the centre of the continent", the situation is 'very dramatic'" (Faivre, 2018).

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Résumé : La Russie et la Chine défient l'ordre libéral et l'État de droit au niveau mondial et régional. L'administration Trump a facilité le soutien à l'abandon de l'ordre international libéral et du système d'États "westphalien" que l'Amérique avait défendu pendant des siècles. L'extrémisme prospère dans le monde entier, y compris en Afrique subsaharienne, alimenté par les séquelles du colonialisme, de la pauvreté et des idéologies islamistes. Les régions à statut d'État limité sont devenues des États défaillants où des conflits violents ont menacé la sécurité et la stabilité régionales. La Russie a profité du vide de pouvoir qui en a résulté. Moscou s'est concentré sur les pays qui étaient autrefois des colonies françaises et portugaises, que Moscou croyait plus faciles à infiltrer. Dans ces conditions, Poutine est libre d'exploiter les contradictions politiques et sociales en Afrique et de déstabiliser l'ordre occidental, même au risque de la montée du terrorisme islamique. Les pipelines criminels terroristes et les États corrompus sont exploités par les marchands d'armes russes à travers l'Afrique depuis des décennies. Ceux-ci comprenaient un soutien notoire au régime de Taylor au Liberia au début des années 2000, y compris le tristement célèbre marchand d'armes russe Viktor Bout, surnommé le « marchand de la mort ». La coopération reposait sur le contrôle par l'État des ports d'entrée et de sortie des organisations criminelles afin de préserver la participation aux bénéfiques, les passeports diplomatiques, y compris l'immunité associée, et l'état de droit, qui garantissait la bonne commercialisation de ces entreprises. Aujourd'hui, la Russie bénéficie principalement de la « sécurité » offerte aux dirigeants autocratiques, notamment par la vente d'armes, des conseils et une formation aux opérations de contre-insurrection et de contre-terrorisme contre le terrorisme islamique en échange de l'accès aux ressources et aux marchés africains. Outre Al-Quida, l'État islamique (ISIS), Boko Haram, d'autres organisations islamiques locales alimentent le terrorisme en ASS. Moscou s'intéresse particulièrement à la Corne de l'Afrique pour contrôler d'importantes routes commerciales d'importance mondiale.

Zusammenfassung: Russland und China fordern die freiheitliche Ordnung und Rechtsstaatlichkeit auf globaler und regionaler Ebene heraus. Die US-Regierung unter Trump hat die Abwendung von der liberalen internationalen Ordnung und dem „westfälischen“ Staatensystem, das Amerika jahrhundertlang verteidigt hatte, noch unterstützt. Der Extremismus blüht weltweit auf, einschließlich Subsahara-Afrika, genährt von den Nachwirkungen des Kolonialismus, der Armut und islamistischen Ideologien. Regionen mit begrenzter Staatlichkeit wurden zu gescheiterten Staaten in denen gewalttätige Konflikte, die die regionale Sicherheit und Stabilität gefährdeten. Russland profitierte von dem daraus resultierenden Machtvakuum. Moskau konzentrierte sich dabei auf Länder, die früher französische und portugiesische Kolonien waren, die aus Sicht Moskaus leichter zu unterwandern seien. Unter diesen Bedingungen hat Putin freie Hand, um die politischen und sozialen Widersprüche auszunutzen und die westliche Ordnung zu destabilisieren, selbst wenn er den Aufstieg des islamischen Terrorismus dabei in Kauf nimmt. Terroristische kriminelle Pipelines und korrupte Staaten wurden bereits seit Jahrzehnten von russischen Waffenhändlern in ganz Afrika genutzt. Dazu gehörte die berühmte Unterstützung des Taylor-Regimes in Liberia in den frühen 2000er Jahren, einschließlich des verrufenen russischen Waffenhändlers Viktor Bout, der als „Kaufmann des Todes“ bezeichnet wurde. Die Zusammenarbeit basierte auf der staatlichen Kontrolle von Ein- und Ausreisehäfen für kriminelle Organisationen um die Gewinnbeteiligung, Diplomatenpässen, einschließlich der damit verbundenen Immunität, sowie Rechtsstaatlichkeit, zu gewährleisten, welche die reibungslose Absatzpolitik dieser Unternehmen gewährleistete. Heute profitiert Russland hauptsächlich von der Bereitstellung von „Sicherheit“ für autokratische Führer, einschließlich Waffenverkäufen, Beratung und Schulung in Anti-Aufstands- und Anti-Terror-Operationen gegen den islamischen Terrorismus im Austausch für den Zugang zu afrikanischen Ressourcen und Märkten. Abgesehen von Al-Quida, schüren der Islamische Staat (ISIS), Boko Haram und andere lokale islamische Organisationen den Terrorismus in SSA. Moskaus besonderes Interesse gilt dem Horn von Afrika, um wichtige Handelsrouten von globaler Bedeutung zu kontrollieren.